

## Red Chain

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## Red Chain

by [dontrollthedice](#)

### Summary

When Dream moved to Sinnoh, he imagined he would live an average life with his Yamask while working as Professor Rowan's assistant.

Traveling across Sinnoh with two trainers who probably hated each other, discovering more details about who Yamask was as a human, and being dragged into fighting Team Galactic while investigating the mythology of the three lake guardians hadn't occurred to him.

# Chapter 1

Moving to a new region was stressful for all the wrong reasons.

Settling in and finding a job wouldn't be a problem; Dream was only moving to Sinnoh to work at Professor Rowan's lab, after all. Dream had arranged for most of his belongings to be moved into his house weeks before, so there was no need to worry about getting swallowed by all the furniture he needed to move. On top of that, he only had one pokemon with him.

It just so happened that that pokemon was a nervous wreck.

"Yamask," Dream whispered. He scratched the space between its eyes where he knew it liked to be scratched, but it did nothing to alleviate the worries of the pokemon in his arms as they waited outside for the last of their furniture to be moved in.

Their house was tucked in the corner of Sandgem town, where they were covered on two sides by nothing but trees. There were only two windows, one on the front of the house and the other on the back wall. It should, by all means, have been the least stress-inducing house for Yamask to reside in, but he supposed he should've known that moving to any unfamiliar place would stress it out.

"You're gonna be okay," Dream said, careful to keep his tone soft. "I'm here, alright? You don't need to worry about anything."

A few minutes later, a group of workers walked out of the house with their pokemon in tow. They exchanged a farewell with Dream before boarding their van and driving out of the town.

"See? It wasn't that bad, was it?" Dream said.

Yamask craned its head to glare at Dream.

"... Yeah, sorry, that was kind of a stupid thing to say. Let's check out our new house."

It was only then that Yamask relaxed in its trainer's hold and allowed itself to be taken inside the house.

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The view of Lake Verity was a stunning beauty. The look on Professor Rowan's face when Dream showed up thirty minutes late to his first day on the job was the opposite.

"Sorry," Dream managed to wheeze out when he finally broke into the clearing with Yamask hot on his trail. His head was fuzzy. In place of his thoughts, there was only TV static. He had only just regained his sense of direction after stumbling around Route 201.

"You're late," Rowan said. There was a signature frown on his lips that sent Dream's fight-or-flight reaction screaming. "Why?"

"Uh... Yamask used Haze on me when I tried to get dressed. I know it sounds hard to believe, but —"

"No, your Yamask's reaction is quite telling."

Dream turned back around to Yamask, who hid its eyes behind its... hands? Ears? Dream never figured out which human body part those appendages were analogous to.

Rowan continued. "Still, the solution is to plan better for next time. Will this happen again?"

"No."

"Excellent. Now, let us get to work." He picked up a briefcase from the ground, and their work at Lake Verity began.

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After five hours of nonstop discussion on pokemon evolution, Dream's head was ready to explode.

"We've collected enough data here," Professor Rowan said, flipping through pages and pages of academic essays. "But something appears to be different than it was before..."

Dream looked out at the lake.

There was no discernible difference from that morning to now. The same waves splashed on the shore with the strength of an underleveled Magikarp, Starlys chirped in the distance, Bidoofs poked their heads out of the tall grass, tilting their heads in curiosity but never managing to work up the courage to approach them outside of it.

Still, a pit of dread burrowed in his stomach when he gazed out into the vastness of the lake. It couldn't be that he was afraid of open bodies of water; he had grown up in Humilau City, after all. There was no fear of a wild pokemon attacking them out of nowhere either.

But if not that, then what was it?

The light blue, almost transparent color of the water darkened to a deep sky blue. The dark green colors of the wild grass was next, then the ground, then the trees around them until everything blended together into the same shade of blue.

*Kyuuun...*

"Dream, we're leaving."

Then everything snapped back to the way it was before.

Dream blinked away the fog at the edges of his vision.

Blue. Why was everything blue? And what was with that pokemon cry at the end?

"Dream."

Dream whipped his head around to see Professor Rowan and Yamask staring at him with varying levels of concern in their expressions. "Oh, sorry. I just thought I saw something."

Professor Rowan turned away while Yamask's worried gaze lingered on him.

"There is one thing I can say. There are many rare kinds of Pokémon in Sinnoh. The region should serve us very well in regard to our studies." With that, Professor Rowan picked up his briefcase

and walked towards the path back to Route 201.

Dream followed, the shade of blue slowly drifting out of his head.

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He saw... two glowing yellow eyes. A red oval was at the center. The background... that shade of blue that surrounded him at the lake.

“Who are you?” Dream shouted into the void of blue.

The same pokemon cry rang out in the empty space.

Then he woke up.

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“And that’s why I woke up sweating.”

Yamask tilted its head, confused and worried.

Dream had decided to take Rowan’s advice and prepare ahead for Yamask to try preventing him from leaving the house, but none of its moves ever came. Instead, he had an extra hour in the morning to brew tea, sit down, and relax with Yamask before it was time to head to work. And of course, given who Yamask was as a pokemon, it decided the best use of its time was worrying over Dream.

“Don’t worry about me, okay?” Dream said. He smoothed out the clothes he was preparing to change into on the coffee table.

Dreams were weird. His head was killing him yesterday. There was no logical explanation for what he had experienced, but dreams and hallucinations didn’t require one.

There was a burning sensation where he was certain Yamask was eyeing him.

“Don’t worry about me,” Dream said. He stretched his arms above his head and yawned. “Let’s just go to work early.”

Yamask didn’t look convinced but followed him as he walked out the door.

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The dreams didn’t stop.

Every night, it was the same dream: two glowing yellow eyes, a red oval, shade of blue behind them. And without fail, as soon as a pokemon began crying, Dream woke up, sweating and shivering.

And of course, Yamask was always hovering over him, making large, red eyes the first thing he saw when he woke up in the morning. It was awfully reminiscent of the phase in their relationship where Yamask would surprise him by trying to shove his face into its mask. He never did find out if Yamask knew what the consequences of that would be, but he did know he did not want to relive that time period and thus swatted Yamask away every time.

Yamask huffed and slammed itself into his shoulder.

“I know, I know,” Dream sighed. He sat up, his head still reeling from the dream. The warmth he knew he should be feeling under his blankets wasn’t present. He turned to look at Yamask. “You want some lemonade? I know you like bitter stuff, but...”

Yamask’s concerned gaze sharpened into a glare. It huffed again and waited at the door.

“If you wanted to go outside, you could’ve just said so,” Dream said with an eye roll. He stood up from bed and yawned before throwing the door open.

Yamask shot out like a bullet. It seemed anxious to do... something. Hopefully it wouldn’t get itself into trouble.

He couldn’t worry about it now. He had work in an hour, and Yamask had a good record of making its way back to him.

Dream shook the last remnants of blue from his head and started his day.

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Being greeted in the lab by an especially stern-looking Professor Rowan and Yamask beside him was always a treat.

“Dream,” Rowan said, “your Yamask has informed me of something peculiar.”

Dream’s gaze drifted to Yamask, who hid its eyes behind its hands. “I can imagine what that would be. Sorry for bothering you. Come here, Yamask.”

Yamask darted to his side but still wouldn’t look at him.

“That’s actually not the case,” Rowan said. His lips curved up the slightest bit into a ghost of a smile. “Could you recall what you’ve seen to me? Yamask here has already told me, but I’d like to hear it from you myself.”

Dream described what he had seen, starting with the shade of blue at Lake Verity to the frequency of the dreams he’d been having.

Professor Rowan nodded along to everything. When Dream stopped, he spoke again after a pause. “I see. I have a theory on what you could’ve been seeing. Follow me.”

Dream followed Professor Rowan into an area filled with bookshelves. A long table was placed in the room but missing of any pages or pencils he would normally expect on them. Yamask leapt onto the table and watched from a foot away.

“Look at this map.” Professor Rowan handed him a thin book with a blue bookmark inserted in one of its pages.

Well, Dream wasn't one to protest something like that. He opened the book to where the bookmark had been inserted, only to see a geographical map of the Sinnoh region with unreadable notes scrawled in black pen all over it.

"You're familiar with Lake Verity. Did you notice there's two more lakes in the Sinnoh region?"

Now he did. He nodded accordingly.

"In the three lakes of Sinnoh, there are said to be mirage pokémon: Mesprit, the bringer of emotion; Azelf, the bringer of willpower; and Uxie, the bringer of knowledge. Legends say that if any of the three lake guardians were to be harmed, the world would be disrupted."

"In what way?"

"We aren't sure yet. And we don't want to find out."

Then it clicked.

"Are you saying there's a possibility that..." Dream didn't want to finish his sentence.

It seemed Professor Rowan understood anyway. "Yes. And I believe you're one of the trainers that the lake guardians have reached out to."

The lake guardians...

"One of?" Dream repeated.

"I have contact with professors from around the world. There are only two other trainers that have reported having similar visions. Their professors informed me that they had arrived in Sinnoh two weeks prior to today to check up on the lakes." Professor Rowan took the book back and slid it into its correct spot on the bookcase. "I'd like to ask you to check up on the lakes as well. There's said to be a cave somewhere in the lake, and I think going there would provide some insight as to how the lake guardians are faring."

"I mean," Dream said, "I can just go to Lake Verity right now."

"And how do you plan to get across the water?"

Dream fell silent.

"You're a creative person, Dream. I'm certain you can devise a strategy to investigate the lakes."

"Hang on a second," Dream said, "I just got here. If I go, don't you have to find a new assistant?"

Professor Rowan paused, then nodded. "That would cause some trouble, yes. Stay here." He walked out of the bookshelf room.

Dream exchanged a glance with Yamask. Yamask stared back, its expression blank.

He didn't even have a water type pokémon, and he was certain Yamask couldn't carry him across the water. And how much of a time limit did they have on this anyway? Were they doomed in a couple days, or...

Professor Rowan stepped back into the room with a red device in hand. There was something heavy about the expression on his face, as stern as it was. Dream felt he was in the presence of something big, something important.

“My name, as you know, is Rowan. I study pokemon. First of all, I want to know exactly what kinds of pokemon live in the Sinnoh region. To do so, it is necessary to collect data using the Pokedex.” He held out the red device. “I want to entrust you with this Pokedex. While you’re on your journey, will you use it to record data on all the pokemon in Sinnoh for me?”

Dream studied the device. He had heard of such machines before, but he had never had experience working with it. “Will it really record every pokemon I encounter automatically?”

“Yes. Catching the pokemon would yield more data, but it’s only necessary to see the pokemon.”

“Then...” Dream turned to Yamask.

They’ve both grown. Much more than Dream had anticipated, but they’ve grown.

“It’s been a long time since we’ve been on an adventure, hasn’t it?” Dream asked.

Yamask made a sound of agreement before nudging Dream closer to the pokedex.

“I’m glad we agree.” Dream took the Pokedex. “I’ll accept it.”

“Hm! Good answer,” Professor Rowan said. Then something shifted, and the ice in his expression melted. “I’ve lived for sixty long years. Even now, I get a thrill when I’m with a pokemon.”

There was only truth in that. Even after being with Yamask for ten years, there was no telling what it would do next. That unpredictability, he had to admit, was thrilling.

“Now, you should know there are countless pokemon in the world. That means there are just as many thrills waiting for you.”

During his studies in a lab, he was always told to not develop any attachments to the pokemon they were studying lest they be studied at a different location or released in the wild. Now that he was free to form any attachments he wanted, what kind of pokemon would he become friends with?

“Now go! Dream, your grand adventure begins now!”

And that was the start of Dream’s journey.

Yet here he was now, standing at the path leading into Route 202, Yamask at his side.

Dream turned to Yamask, and Yamask stared back, the same question in their heads.

*What do we do now?*

## Chapter 2

### Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Route 202 was annoying, but short. For that, Dream was grateful.

To be fair, it wasn't like they were unprepared for going into tall grass and facing trainers. Dream had already amassed a number of pokeballs and potions from his various research jobs. And even though he just moved into his house, it wasn't as if he needed to keep it occupied in order to keep it.

Still, as much bravery as Yamask had demonstrated even agreeing to go on this journey with him, he shouldn't expect it to keep up that courage to that level. That would be unfair to a pokemon who spent years hiding from society.

The second he stepped onto the stairs leading to Jubilife City, the air changed.

Streetlamps and lights from building windows illuminated the streets. Even at the time it was now—his Poketch read 22:00—people were still outside, including an elderly man and two men trading pokemon. Everyone in the city was busy, but Dream couldn't help but let his fists finally unclench and his shoulders droop for the first time since he left Sandgem Town.

“There's a Pokecenter,” Dream said. “Let's get you healed up.”

But Yamask stared at the night sky while holding its mask close to it. Its mouth was left agape as its gaze trailed the stars in the sky. Then it looked down at its mask, its expression unreadable.

Huh.

Dream wrapped an arm against its back. “It's okay. We can explore the city some more.”

Yamask's eyes glittered with appreciation as it looked back up at Dream. Its mouth broke into a smile, then it darted off into the streets.

Dream followed, wondering if they had time for this.

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After a couple of hours of chasing Yamask into the Poketch Company headquarters, Jubilife TV building, and a couple apartment buildings, Yamask had finally allowed itself to be taken to the Pokecenter to be healed.

“Yamask, the Trainers' School is closed at night,” Dream sighed. “What, you expected them to be open at midnight? It's so late that there's no people outside anymore. And they're kids, Yamask. They were probably asleep when we first got here.”

Yamask crossed its arms and grumbled. It may have been centuries older than him, but it still definitely acted more like a child between the two of them.

“Watching the stars is fine. I don't mind going to sleep a little later. But you can't just break into a



Trainers' School. What would you even see in there?"

Yamask paid no attention to him. Instead, it bolted out of the Pokecenter immediately after being healed.

Despite the aching muscles in his body, Dream followed, only to see that Yamask had stopped right at the corner of the building.

Dream frowned. "Yamask, what—"

"Give up the act!" came a voice.

That couldn't be good.

Yamask glared and gestured for him to be quiet before peering over the corner of the building.

Dream stepped beside it and peered as well.

Two people with blue hair wearing... questionable gray, spacesuit-like outfits stood under the streetlamps, each holding a single pokeball in their hands. Another man with a white headband strapped to his head stood across from them.

"We're in Sinnoh," one of the... spacemen(?) said. "Who other than Professor Birch's assistant would have a Shroomish in this region?"

The man's hand flew to cover the two pokeballs strapped to his bag as if that would hide anything. "I don't have a Shroomish. I don't know where you got that idea, but it's not me you're looking for."

"Kid. You were literally playing with it on the street a couple minutes ago."

"I'm nineteen! And where's your proof?"

"We don't have time for this," the other spaceman said. He tossed the pokeball on the ground, summoning a Stunky where the button hit the path. "Surrender what you know now, or we'll take your pokemon, too."

The other spaceman called out a Glameow and mirrored the same battle pose the other spaceman had taken.

Was that supposed to be an intimidating pose? Dream wasn't well-versed in what to do with his body while challenging somebody to a fight, but he was sure whatever they were doing with their limbs wasn't it.

The man shrugged and tossed down two pokeballs, only for one Shroomish to come out.

All three paused to stare at the final pokeball.

"Popplio! Not now!" the man seethed. "Oh my god, you have a *double battle*. Please, Popplio. I need you to come out."

The pokeball didn't budge.

The man picked up the pokeball from the ground and clipped it back onto the strap of his bag. He stared back up, his brows furrowed into a determined glare, but his shaky legs betrayed his uncertainty.

One of the spacemen smirked. “Well, I guess it’ll be an easy—”

“Wait!” Dream shouted.

The volume of his voice shocked even him, and the three turned around to stare in the direction of the voice.

No use hiding now. Dream stepped out from behind the Pokecenter with Yamask at its side, trembling but determined. When he sent it a small smile, Yamask smiled back.

Dream ran towards them with all the speed his running shoes could provide until he stood at the man’s side, and Yamask leapt onto the impromptu battlefield next to Shroomish. His feet screamed at him to take a break, but showing weakness wasn’t a possibility.

“I’ll team with you for this,” Dream said. “I don’t know who the hell these people are, but your Shroomish and my Yamask—we’ll make it work.”

“I...” The man’s gaze darted from Dream to his pokemon, then back to Dream. A faint smile danced on his lips. “Yeah. We’ve got this.” He turned back to the spacemen. “Not so powerful when there’s two people now, are you? I’m giving you one last chance to take your turquoise bowl cut asses out of Jubilife.”

One of the spacemen’s eye twitched, and his glare sharpened. “Like hell we’ll lose to some kids.”

“Nineteen! I mean, I don’t know how old the other guy is, but—”

“We’ll make you regret insulting Team Galactic!”

Then the world disappeared around them and the battle began.

“Night shade, Yamask,” Dream said.

A cloud of dark purple clustered around Yamask into gobs of dark energy. When the gobs grew into the size of baseballs, Yamask sent them flying at the enemy team.

The gobs of purple passed right through Glameow and barely scratched Stunky.

Dream bit his lip. Maybe going into this battle with only ghost type moves against what had to be a normal type pokemon wasn’t such a good idea.

The man raised an eyebrow but didn’t voice any concern to it. “Shroomish, Tackle on Stunky.”

Shroomish—the tiny, *tiny* pokemon—took a few steps back before launching itself into Stunky.

*Don’t laugh, Dream thought, biting his lip. This is a serious battle with real stakes. No matter what you do, don’t laugh.*

“Growl, Glameow,” one of the spacemen said.

Glameow poised itself into a defensive position before yowling the most grating sound Dream had ever heard. He winced along with his pokemon. It would be hard to attack after hearing something like that.

“Follow it up with a Poison Gas on Shroomish!” the other spaceman said, swinging his arm out for another ridiculous pose.

“Dodge it, Shroomish!” the man shouted.

The purple gas missed Shroomish just by a hair.

Dream laughed at that, then the spaceman’s glare latched onto him. “Oh my god, you were so excited about it, then it missed. Are you the same guy who said that thing about Team Galactic or whatever? I can’t tell.”

The man next to him broke into laughter, too, earning another glare from the spaceman.

God. It was two in the morning, and he was out in Jubilife City battling some guys in shiny, gray outfits with who was apparently Professor Birch’s assistant less than twenty-four hours after Professor Rowan gave him the Pokedex. Life couldn’t get any weirder.

“Enough of that!” the spaceman yelled. “Poison Gas on Shroomish!”

This time, when it landed and the man’s laughter faded, Dream grinned.

“Haze, Yamask,” Dream said.

The entire battlefield was covered in a field of puffy, white clouds. When it faded, the poison bubbles on Shroomish’s skin were gone.

Battling wasn’t the field of study Dream focused on. But now that he was on the streets battling with a guy he just met a couple minutes ago and pissing off another person who seemed like a prick...

It was exhilarating. And Yamask, though still quivering like a leaf, performed all of its moves with a passion he had never seen from it. Was Yamask enjoying this as much as he was?

The battle lasted for several more turns before both the spacemen’s pokemon were knocked out. The victors who remained on the battlefield were Shroomish and Yamask, still standing—weakened, but standing..

One of the spacemen recalled his Glameow. His eyes were wide open and his mouth agape. “How is this possible? The two of us losing to... people like them?”

“This won’t do,” the other spaceman said, shaking his head as he recalled Stunky. “Time to retreat. This mission is a total failure.” His face hardened as his gaze moved from the pokemon to Dream and the other man. “You leave us no option. We will retreat for now. We shall do so because Team Galactic is benevolent to all.”

The two turned on their heels and walked away with straight backs and hands at their sides.

Dream watched them disappear into the horizon onto Route 204.

Two spacemen... walking down a street at two in the morning... not even twenty-four hours after Dream was sent on this hell of a journey...

Dream burst out laughing.

The man’s eyes crinkled as he grinned. A giggle escaped his lips before erupting into full blown laughter.

There they were, two adult men laughing in the middle of Jubilife City at fuck o’clock. Yamask and Shroomish stood next to them, exchanging confused glances.

Dream's lungs burned by the time his laughter stopped. He faced the other man, his lips still curved up into a confused smile. "Man, what the hell was that?"

"I have no idea," he said. He stopped to wipe a tear from his eye. "Apparently they'd been stalking me since I left Eterna City. Kinda creepy, but they're so bad at hiding. You know they tried to blend into the walls of a mountain?"

"I wonder what gave them away."

"Yeah, me too." The man held his hand out. "But thanks for helping me back there. The name's Sappnap. You probably heard it from them, but I'm Professor Birch's assistant."

Dream shook the hand. "I'm Dream, Professor Rowan's assistant. Isn't Professor Birch in Hoenn?"

"Yeah, but he sent me here to do some work in the lakes. Now, come on, let me get you a Pokecenter room."

"Oh, no, that's not necessary."

"It's the least I could do after dragging you into a fight at two in the morning."

"I think I dragged myself into that fight." Dream faced Yamask, holding his arms out. "C'mere, Yamask. Let's get you healed up. I'm proud of you."

Yamask beamed at the praise and leapt up into its trainer's arms.

Sappnap picked up Shroomish as well with a yawn. "Man, I'm tired. I'm gonna get breakfast tomorrow at the Pokecenter. If you wanna join me, you can."

"Sounds good. I'll see you then."

The two exchanged their farewells before Sappnap walked towards the Pokecenter, disappearing when he turned the corner.

Dream exchanged a glance with his Yamask, then he smiled and patted it on the head. "Really. I'm proud of you, Yamask. And I think we made a friend, too."

Yamask looked up at him, tilting its head.

"Yes, really. You did a good job today. Now, we should get you healed up, okay? Let's go."

Dream and Yamask walked into the Pokecenter, exhausted to the bone but smiling.

## Chapter End Notes

yes im giving a pokemon character development, fight me (■`´)■

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